

**BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING
Park and Recreation Department
Conference Room, 11th Floor, City Hall
Monday, July 12, 2004
3:30 p.m.**

Present: Bob Aldrich, June Bailey, Dennis Brunner, Glen Dey, Janet Miller

Absent: Colleen Craig, Bobbie Harris

Also Present: John Stevens and Debra Miller, Schweiter East Neighborhood Association (SENA); Rosemary Weber – GreenWay Alliance; Kathy Dittmer and M.S. Mitchell - Riverside Citizens Association; and Doug Kupper, Mike North and Maryann Crockett (staff)

President Bailey called the meeting to order at approximately 3:30 p.m. The minutes of the June 14, 2004, Regular Meeting were reviewed and approved.

1. **Country Acres Parcels Update.** Director Kupper commented that the plat of the area was due to be reviewed again by the Wichita-Sedgwick County Metropolitan Area Planning Commission (MAPC). He stated that the plat drawing included a 30-foot easement between the two park parcels, although the easement was not recommended by the City Council when the item was presented to them for approval of the conditional use permit. He commented that Councilman Martz specifically asked that the request for a 30-foot easement be removed as one of the requirements of the conditional use permit requested by the Midian Shrine organization.
 - **M.S. Mitchell** – referred board members to a map of the area. He gave a brief background of the item stating that the City had discussed possible acquisition of the property adjacent to the two park parcels in the past as part of the idea of developing a hike/bike trail connection from south of 9th Street to Zoo Boulevard and Sedgwick County Park. He commented that the idea of a connecting trail has been in the planning stages for years, and added that it was part of the Park and Open Space Master Plan approved by the City Council in 1996. He said one of the proposals that had been explored was obtaining an access easement from Westar for the area under the power lines; however, Westar strongly objected to the idea. In addition, he said several residents along the proposed easement objected to the establishment of a hike/bike path behind their properties. He said the Planning Sub-Division Committee vote was split two/two on the easement and that it would appear on the MAPC agenda some time in the future for final approval of the plat. He concluded by asking the Board to let the Council know that there was a public need for the proposed easement to establish a hike/bike trail.

There was general discussion concerning the two park parcels and the previous request by the neighborhood that the City not vacate the area. Janet Miller referred to the aerial photograph of the parcels and asked what was being done about the numerous encroachments onto parkland. Staff commented that they were exploring several ways to deal with the encroachments.

There was also discussion concerning the City Council receiving copies of the Park Board minutes in a timely manner so that they were aware of discussion on park related issues. M.S. Mitchell suggested the Board request that the plat be delayed pending further public discussion on the easement proposal. President Bailey said the Board could hold a special meeting and invite the public to discuss the issue. Bob Aldrich suggested direct notification of the adjacent property owners.

Director Kupper commented that representatives from both the Spinnaker Cove and Country Acres Neighborhood Associations spoke to the District Advisory Board V regarding the easement. He said Spinnaker Cove residents didn't want the bike/hike path located under the power lines, and Country Acres residents didn't want the bike/hike path located behind their property. He said he did not see the purpose of speaking to the same groups again. Glen Dey said he would like it on the record that the Board made a decision that for some reason was being ignored. President Bailey said the Board could communicate to both the City Council and MAPC that they would really like to see the easement for a bike/hike path happen. Janet Miller suggested sending an official letter.

On motion by Aldrich, second by Dey, IT WAS VOTED UNANIMOUSLY that President Bailey draft a letter to be sent to the City Council, Wichita-Sedgwick County Metropolitan Area Planning Commission and District Advisory Board V, explaining the Board's discussion and position on the easement.

2. **Discussion on Golf Division.** Glen Dey said he requested discussion of this item based on recent newspaper articles concerning the financial status of the City's golf system. He said he was interested in knowing how the shortfall occurred and the long-range implications to the Park and Recreation Department's budget.

Director Kupper gave a brief background on the item stating that a study was conducted in late 1999 and early 2000 that supported the idea of a fifth municipal golf course in Wichita. He said various financial projections were provided which included costs of building the course and debt management. He said the report concluded that approximately 215,000 rounds of golf would be played at each municipal course. However, he said due to extenuating circumstances from the September 11, 2001 attack on the United States, the resulting lay-offs, and overall slumping economy, rounds of golf have dropped to approximately 185,000.

Director Kupper said staff was restructuring the debt management in addition to developing various new marketing strategies including packages with local hotels and advertising in state and national golf publications, changing business practices, and possibly decreasing or rolling back fees. Responding to a question from Dey, Director Kupper explained that golf courses were an enterprise funded operation and, therefore, were separate from the Park and Recreation Department budget. Janet Miller clarified that the funds could not be co-mingled. Director Kupper also reviewed the differences in fees between Auburn Hills and the other four City courses as well as the differences in the income from cart rentals.

Dennis Brunner agreed that all of those strategies were good ideas. He also mentioned that he had received complaints regarding the staff at Auburn Hill Golf Course. Dey commented that staff had sufficiently addressed his concerns.

3. **Garvey Park Update.** Director Kupper reported that park improvements were under construction at Garvey including restrooms, parking lot, canoe launch and eventually a children's play area. He said

there was a possibility that the City would be able to partner with the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks (KDWP) and obtain additional resources to establish additional launch sites downstream. He said in the future, the longest canoeing area in Kansas might well be anchored in Wichita. He said staff has also been discussing partnering with the City of Derby to develop the South Arkansas River Greenway, which was also an ideal location for a canoe launch site.

4. **Tennis Court Replacement Plan.** Director Kupper referred board members to a copy of a document entitled “Court Conditions” which indicated that the City had eighty-five tennis courts in the Park system. He stated that twenty-five courts have been replaced since 1998. He commented that at one time, park staff had received permission from the Schweiter Home Owner’s Association to remove the dilapidated courts at Schweiter Park; however, the homeowner’s association has now requested that the tennis courts be replaced. He said staff would re-program replacement of the courts back into the Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

Director Kupper explained that the philosophy has been to replace courts located at recreation centers first because staff can program those courts for lessons and tournaments that would generate revenue. He said staff is also trying to come up with a reasonable plan to replace neighborhood courts, as funds become available. Responding to a question from Aldrich, he explained that all asphalt courts are being replaced with post-tension concrete courts that were likely to last twenty plus years. Aldrich asked what happened to the areas where courts were not replaced. Director Kupper stated that they revert back to green space.

Janet Miller asked if there were any new courts located close to Schweiter Park. Director Kupper stated that there were resurfaced courts at College Hill Park and that courts at South Linwood were scheduled to be replaced/resurfaced in 2004. He referred board members to a list of the twenty-five courts that had been either replaced or resurfaced. He added that courts at West Douglas, Aley, Murdock, Sunset and South Linwood were scheduled to be replaced in 2004.

There was discussion concerning use of CIP and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to repair/replace courts. Director Kupper commented that each year approximately \$180,000 is budgeted in the CIP program for tennis court repair/replacement. He said \$180,000 is the approximate cost of two post-tension double court systems.

- **John Stevens, Schweiter East Neighborhood Association** - referred board members to a copy of a letter that he provided dated January 20, 2002, that outlined seven points discussed with the neighborhood association and the Park Department Recreation Director at that time. He said he appreciated the “for profit “ things that were going at the recreation centers; however, he said the SENA has paid taxes for over 50-100 years and that they are entitled to some help renovating Schweiter Park. He provided several pictures of the conditions of the park including flooding under the new playground equipment, condition of the courts and the electrical box at the courts, picnic tables, deep grass and other items. He concluded by giving board members a copy of an estimate provided by John Henzel Tennis Court Systems to resurface the courts for \$5,000.00 per court. He requested help from the department to maintain the park and said he couldn’t understand why it is so difficult for the City to keep things maintained.

Responding to a question from President Bailey, Director Kupper stated that staff was aware that there was a drainage problem under the new playground equipment; that it was being addressed and would probably be resolved sometime this summer. He added that additional playground equipment was

scheduled to be installed at the park. He mentioned the mowing rotation schedule for the area (21-28 days); funding restraints; and the inordinate amount of rain that the region has had this summer.

Glen Dey asked for a time frame on possible repair or replacement of the tennis courts at Schweiter Park. Director Kupper said possibly within three to five years with CIP funds; however, he said he would have staff check to see if Schweiter was in one of the "Local Investment Areas" that could qualify for CDBG funds, which could move it up on the schedule. Bob Aldrich requested that some of the other minor things like the picnic benches and electrical box be addressed sooner.

Janet Miller said she understood and appreciated Mr. Steven's and SENA's concerns. She explained that the Board is aware that resources are not adequate for maintenance and other improvements and has been requesting additional CIP funds and funding from other sources for some time. She added that she did not feel that mowing every twenty-one days was enough. She commented on the fact that Schweiter Park had new playground equipment, which many parks do not, and the difficulties of working with limited funds and coming up with strategies on replacement/repair of equipment, facilities and other items.

Glen Dey commented that the Board's focus was policy issues. He encouraged the SENA to work with their Council representative to see if the area qualified for CDBG funds. He said the Board was not putting SENA off; however, the department had to work within the budget allocated by the City Council.

President Bailey briefly related how the neighborhood association in her area (Orchard Breeze Neighborhood Association) worked with the City under the "Matching Playground Equipment Fund" program to replace equipment and other amenities in Kiwanis Park. She said the association also held fundraisers to replace benches and establish a walking path at the park. She also mentioned the "Adopt a Park Program" as a way the neighborhood could help with park mowing.

- Debra Miller, Schweiter East Neighborhood Association - commented that in 2000, Mr. Kupper came to the SENA neighborhood picnic and they talked about replacement of the tennis courts. She said she felt there was a communication problem.

President Bailey said she encouraged the SENA to contact Councilman Carl Brewer. Director Kupper said staff would research whether SENA qualified for CDBG funds.

On motion by Miller, second by Bailey, IT WAS VOTED UNANIMOUSLY that the Board agreed with the strategy of replacing tennis courts at recreation centers first.

5. **Director's Update.** Director Kupper reported briefly on the following items:

- City Council Workshop – commented that the board was tentatively scheduled to meet with the City Council on Tuesday, July 27, 2004, to discuss Charter Ordinance #125. He said staff would provide board members a time and location when it became available.
- Summer of Discovery – President Bailey asked for a status report on the program. Director Kupper stated that revenues were up from last year. He said the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) had inspected one center and that they had found no violations whatsoever. He mentioned other programs such as the free kindergarten through sixth grade program at Colvin,

which helped the Wichita Police Department receive an international award last year for reducing crime.

- Rain Outs - Commented that the inclement weather has wreaked havoc on the baseball and softball programs.
- Grass Mowing Issue - President Bailey asked about the mowing rotation schedule. Director Kupper commented that staff mowed over 6,000 acres. He said approximately 300 acres were on a 7-14 day mowing rotation; the majority of acreage was on a 21-28 day mowing rotation.
- Old Linwood School – Stated that Linwood School is slated for demolition November 1, 2004. He added that USD 259 wants to install a fence at the new Linwood School. He said the issue would be brought back to the Board for discussion as it related to the public's use of the playground area.
- August Board Meeting – President Bailey stated that she would be out of town Monday, August 9, 2004, and requested that the August Board meeting to rescheduled to Monday, August 16, 2004. It was the general consensus of the Board to move the meeting to August 16.
- Rail-Banking – Glen Dey asked about the status of the rail-banking project. Director Kupper commented that legal documents were being exchanged, but that the project has not been finalized as it relates to coming into the City from the Butler County line. He mentioned that the project will add 300 acres to park mowing and maintenance tasks.

Bob Aldrich commented that every time something gets abandoned, the Park Department picks up maintenance. Director Kupper commented that the Park and Recreation Department was a key member of the City team.

- Linwood Replacement Land – Janet Miller requested the status of the land replacement project. Director Kupper reported that staff was still trying to locate land within close proximity to the park and neighborhood. He said staff needs to locate property valued at \$187,000 to replace the 4.6 acres.

6. Executive Session.

On motion by Aldrich, second by Dey, IT WAS VOTED UNANIMOUSLY that the Board recess into executive session for consultation with legal counsel on matters privileged in the attorney-client relationship relating to Ordinance #125 and that the Board return from executive session in approximately ten minutes at 5:15 p.m.

The Board returned from executive session at approximately 5:15 p.m. No action was necessary as a result of the executive session.

7. Other Items.

- Skate Park – President Bailey read correspondence (and her reply) from a female skateboard enthusiast regarding the status of the City's proposed skateboard park. It was noted that the indoor skate facility "Borderline" was closed. She also requested that she be put on the mailing list for

future discussion of the City skate park. Glen Dey suggested park staff develop “guidelines” for use at the skate park as opposed to “rules”.

- Glen Dey – President Bailey referred to an article in the *Wichita Eagle – Neighbors Section*, wherein Dr. Dey was recognized by the District Advisory Board I for his contribution to the community through his work on the development of Grove Park and with the District I Coalition.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

June Bailey, President

ATTEST:

Maryann Crockett, Clerk
Recording Secretary